

## MECHANISMS of Allergic Disease



This information is based on recommendations in *The Allergy Report*. The report was developed by a 25-member Task Force, led by the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology. The report contains treatment and management guidelines for allergic disease. See [www.theallergyreport.org](http://www.theallergyreport.org) for the report's full text.

Asthma is an ongoing disease that inflames the airways, making it difficult to breathe. As shown below, when people have asthma, their airways are narrowed, making it hard for air to flow in and out of the lungs.

## WHY ASTHMA MAKES IT HARD TO BREATHE



When children are exposed to asthma triggers, their airways become blocked and they may start to wheeze, cough and have trouble breathing as the airways narrow.



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## HOW ALLERGIES AFFECT THE BODY

About 50 million Americans suffer with allergies. They experience adverse reactions to normally harmless substances, such as dust, pollen, food or mold. The following illustration explains how the body reacts to these substances in people who have allergies.

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